

Senate Committee on Local Government & Elections
Senate Bill #313, October 2, 2013

Testimony of Kelly Figueiredo & Mark Graham

Good Afternoon. My name is Mark Graham, Community Development Director for Delta Charter Township on the west side of the City of Lansing. Accompanying me today is Kelly Figueiredo who established our rental housing inspection program in 2006. Our program inspects all of our 8,000 rental units every 3 years. I'd like Kelly to briefly note some of her experiences:

KELLY COMMENTS HERE

MR. GRAHAM HAS A FEW CLOSING COMMENTS:

1. The proposed \$40 inspection fee has no provisions to account for inflation. I'm reminded of the \$3 monthly mobile home park tax which appeared to be reasonable when it was adopted in 1959 but hasn't changed in the past 50 years.
2. SB 313 prohibits municipalities from charging an additional fee for a first re-inspection. Re-inspections cost everyone time & money. We seek to encourage compliance by providing an "incentive" clause that, if properties are found to be in 100% compliance during our inspection, they're entitled to a 10% rebate. Could incentives be provided in SB 313 rather than prohibitions?
3. We presently levy a registration fee for each building every three years which keeps our information current. Large apartment complexes with multiple buildings & addresses pay more which is reflective of the administrative costs. The proposed "flat" fee of \$100 doesn't reflect the actual costs incurred by a municipality.

Thank you for providing Delta Township an opportunity to comment on SB 313.

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Thank you Mark.

I have inspected thousands of rental units and have found that violations still exist despite being inspected just three years prior. I would like to mention some of our most common findings and safety concerns:

- Non-functioning and missing smoke alarms are a top violation despite the fact that many landlords are doing pre-inspections just prior to our inspection.
- Decayed railings, guardrails, steps, floor joists and deck boards on balconies are found and pose major falling hazards.
- Breached fire walls and draft stops in attics are commonly compromised, due to workers adding electrical / cable television (currently permits and inspections are not required for low voltage installations). Fires can spread rapidly with holes merely the size of a quarter so with the likely amount of changes in tenancy over a 6 year period, this is a major concern for us.
- New appliances such as water heaters and furnaces are often installed by maintenance personnel without proper licensing and permits. Improperly installed water heaters and furnaces can be causes of carbon monoxide poisoning, electrical shock and fire hazards.
- Clogged dryer exhaust terminations are common, which pose fire hazards.
- Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter receptacles have electronic circuitry that can fail and is required to be tested monthly by the testing laboratories. These are regularly cited violations and examples of instances where tenants may not properly protected from electrical hazards.
- The Michigan Electrical Code has requirements for proper installation and grounding of satellite dishes and if not properly installed leave the residents exposed to electrical shock and fire hazards. We have found that satellite dishes are frequently being improperly installed.
- Air conditioning units are being replaced and the proper protection of the breaker is not being evaluated.

And also,

- Tenants frequently will make changes in their rented space that property owner or managers are unaware of that can effect the building safety .

Given these examples, we believe it is crucial to allow municipalities to inspect their rental units in shorter time frames. Thank you for your time. Mr. Graham has a few closing comments.